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C O N F I D E N T I A L THE HAGUE 001739

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [ECON](#) [ETRD](#) [EU](#) [MARR](#) [NL](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#)

SUBJECT: DUTCH PM BALKENDE OUTLINES AGENDA

Classified By: AMB. CLIFFORD SOBEL FOR REASONS 1.5 (B)(D)

1. (C) On June 30, Amb Sobel and Dutch PM Jan Peter Balkende discussed their objectives. The Prime Minister listed three issues on which he personally wanted to lead his new government: values, innovation, and the 2004 EU presidency. In the Fall, the PM will begin traveling to capitals to prepare the Dutch presidency. Preliminarily, the Dutch have cited several political issues they expect to dominate their presidency, including relations with new members, ESDP (especially since they will follow the Irish), the transatlantic relationship, and a decision on whether to open negotiations with Turkey. "Values" is an important issue to this Christian-Democrat Prime Minister and one that resonated in his election. Amb Sobel pointed out the similarity of Prime Minister Balkenende's vision with that of President Bush's and offered to arrange briefings on the President's faith based initiatives. Similarly, Amb Sobel noted the symmetry between the prime minister's innovation council and ideas current in the USG and society.

2. (C) Ambassador Sobel told the Prime Minister of the embassy's ambitious agenda, ranging from innovation and the transatlantic business dialogue to security, counter-terrorism and HIV. He discussed a trade mission to Silicon Valley aimed at developing trade and investment between our two countries, a dialogue among CEOs on trade in financial services, additional steps we can take to develop the Container Security project at the port of Rotterdam, his vision for joint projects to combat HIV/AIDS in Africa, the necessity of the Netherlands making progress on counter-narcotics, steps we can take to expand exchange programs between the U.S. and The Netherlands, and the importance of the Dutch keeping their commitments to NATO, including their ability to deploy and sustain forces even in the face of severe budget cuts.

SOBEL